Vol. 4, No. 4

Mrs. A. G. Tyler

May, 1940

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Canadian POETRY MAGAZINE

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PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF NOVA SCOTIA
HALIFAX, N. S.

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Canadian POETRY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 4
No. 4—MAY, 1940

Published under the auspices of the
CANADIAN AUTHORS' ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 104, STATION F, TORONTO

The Canadian Poetry Magazine

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE issued under the auspices of the Canadian Authors' Association for the encouragement and development of Canadian verse.

Annual Subscription, two dollars; single copy, fifty cents.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope should be enclosed, if return of manuscript is desired.

Individual criticism of submitted verse cannot be undertaken by the magazine.

Address all correspondence to Canadian Poetry Magazine, Post Office Box, No. 104, Station F, Toronto, Ontario.

* * *

Notice of Awards

The Business Management has decided to revert to the *Magazine*'s original policy of awarding prizes, namely: First prize, fifteen dollars; Second, ten dollars; Third, five dollars. Writers of poems awarded Honourable Mention will receive one year's free subscription to the *Canadian Poetry Magazine.*

PRIZES

FOR THE DECEMBER NUMBER

First—*We are Mice, not Men,* Kay Smith, Saint John, N.B.
Second—*The Captains,* Joseph Jenkins, Montreal.
Third—*At Leggatt's Point,* Eric Gaskell, Montreal.

HONOURABLE MENTION

The Primrose Trail, Frances Hanson, Toronto.
The Lake in the Rockies, Sara E. Carsley, Calgary.
Headland at Night, Anne Marriott, Victoria, B.C.

NOTE: As the poems marked by an asterisk in this May number have been awarded prizes in another contest, they are ineligible in the current competition.

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THE Canadian Authors' Association established the Canadian Poetry Magazine to stimulate the production of fine verse in Canada. The twelve issues of Volumes 1, 2, and 3 were largely made possible through the generosity of Foundation Supporters, whose gifts supplemented the Magazine's earnings from subscriptions and advertisements.

We have proved the existence of high-grade ore, but we need your continued support to produce it. If you believe that in the highest sense we cannot nationally exist without a great poetry, you will strengthen us by your financial support. You are invited to assist by contributing to a fund for the production of Volume 4.

FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS FOR VOLUME 4

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J. MARKOWITZ,
Business Executive

The Canadian Poetry MAGAZINE

"You must try to keep The Canadian Poetry Magazine going, for it is one of the best things we have."—TWEEDSMUIR.

VOL. 4, NO. 4 MAY, 1940

EDITOR: E. J. Pratt. ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Leo Cox. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AWARDS: Lady Roddick, E. K. Brown, F. O. Call, William Arthur Deacon, Pelham Edgar, R. K. Gordon, J. M. Lothian, S. Morgan-Powell, V. B. Rhodenizer, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, G. G. Sedgewick, F. W. Tamblyn.

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LORD TWEEDSMUIR
1875-1940
Honorary President of the Canadian Authors' Association

TONIGHT a great-hearted gentleman returns to the storied hill-country of Tweedside, to keep a tryst pledged long ago with those gentle comrade spirits whose names will always be associated with the renaissance of Scottish culture and the greater glory of modern English literature.

There is peace in the Valley of Tweed, a peace secured against the turbulence of a tragic world by the venerable neighbouring hills . . . and there is a nostalgic quality in the winter dusk, sustained by a poignant sense of "far-off things." Across the years, heavy with incident and change, the power of association brings unsolved mysteries of the human spirit to unexpected consummation; and in this retrospective hour, as if prompted by some unheard and strangely evocative appeal,

> The air is full of ballad notes
> Borne out of long ago.

Here, in the land of his fathers, the warmth of a larger confraternity reaches beyond the physical barriers of mortality and embraces a native son. For this is the spirit of a people, and the sum of their cultural inheritance is conveyed by subtle implications of the imaginative mind. Scott, undismayed by the burden of his life's adventure, will greet his biographer heartily; Stevenson, with the light of far places in his eyes and the passionate memorials of a loved homeland in his heart, will have a kindly word for the wandering poet; while Andrew Lang, whimsical critic and the best of good companions, will hail the return of one whose life was dedicated to the ministry of letters.

He comes among them with gladness, not as one who has journeyed in distant countries, returning as a stranger. He comes as a Scotsman, ardent in his pride of race, who has found the solace of his native hills in the heart of the Canadian Rockies. He has heard the proud accents of Argyle in remote outposts of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the softer accents of Peebles-shire on Eastern farms. On the shores of the Lower St. Lawrence, in the heart of French-Canada, he has shared the solemn ritual of an historic faith with men and women whose forefathers came from the Highlands after the Conquest of '59.

He has sojourned in many lands, following the destinies of a people, and his greeting is not that of one who has experienced the bitterness of long separation. He has lived and travelled extensively, and always with sympathetic understanding, in the King's Dominion of Canada, where the sons of France and Scotland, united by many historical ties, have laboured together in the building of a nation. Now, at the close of a lifetime rich in achievement, his greatest mission nobly done, he returns to seek a closer, more intimate relationship with the people of an ancient land.

Tonight, on Tweedside, the spirit of a gallant race is pledged anew. John Buchan, first Baron Tweedsmuir of Elsfield, has come home!

* * *

There is an aristocracy of letters—a select coterie of writers who have made a unique and enduring contribution to the rich heritage of English literature. John Buchan—novelist, historian, essayist, poet, and critic—takes rank with the most eminent of those who have laboured to preserve the things of the mind and the spirit in our generation, who have found delight in the beauties of language and the rich resources of human experience.

The members of the Canadian Authors' Association mourn the untimely passing of their Honorary President, a distinguished and universally beloved writer, and a great gentleman. We remember him, no less, as the Governor-General of Canada, as an able administrator who had identified himself completely with the spirit and aspirations of the Canadian people, who had become, in the words of our Prime Minister (and fellow-member), "their adopted son."

Lord Tweedsmuir's death removes a great citizen of the English-speaking world. His services to Canada cannot be measured in ordinary terms. His legacy to us becomes an inspiring challenge to look beyond the present and material world to "the spiritual frontiers, the horizons of the mind." If we do this, in grateful remembrance, Lord Tweedsmuir's living memorial will be permanently established in the hearts of the Canadian people, as it is already established and secure in the hearts of those who cherish these things.

It is with a deep sense of the loss sustained by our country and our literature, at a time when these things are drawn together in a closer relationship than ever before, that we wish to tender to Her Excellency the Lady Tweedsmuir this sincere expression of sympathy in her great bereavement.

ERIC GASKELL

* * *

The Executive extend their sincere thanks to the Poetry Group of Toronto Branch, C.A.A., for their collective effort and wholehearted assistance in making a signal success of the Third Canadian Poetry Night of March 15, 1940. On that occasion the speakers were Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, Dr. E. J. Pratt, Katherine Hale, Dr. Pelham Edgar, Mr. Eric Gaskell, Miss Marion Fox, Mr. Leo Cox, who represented the Montreal Poetry Group, and Nathaniel Benson.

"THE FATHER OF CANADIAN LITERATURE"

A tribute to Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, read on the eve of his eightieth birthday, at the Canadian Literature Club's "Roberts Night," January 9, 1940, by

NATHANIEL A. BENSON
(President of the Canadian Literature Club)

SIR CHARLES, distinguished guests, fellow-members of the Canadian Literature Club, and friends:

Ten years ago, in my anthology, *Modern Canadian Poetry*, I wrote this dedication: "To my friend, Dr. Charles G. D. Roberts, who since 1880 has been an inspiration and an unfailing guide to those who would make Canadian literature a thing of greatness in word and in spirit."

Fifty years before that dedication was written in a book that contained the work of twenty young Canadian poets from Halifax to Nanaimo, another and a far greater poet than any of these may perhaps hope to be, Archibald Lampman, who was then a student of nineteen at Old Trinity College, wrote to a friend telling him of how one night, late in the year 1880, he had stayed awake most of the night to read a newly-published volume of verse entitled *Orion and Other Poems* written by a young poet of Fredericton, Charles G. D. Roberts. Lampman, half a century ago, spoke of how *Orion* had awakened him and impelled him onward toward the then very nebulous dream of creating a great Canadian literature. And, first encouraged by the earliest published work of the distinguished gentleman in whose honour we are assembled here on this night sixty long years later, Lampman, in the brief span of life which was to be his, arose on the wings of *Orion's* inspiration to engrave his name on the granite of immortality in the literature of our Dominion.

PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF NOVA SCOTIA
HALIFAX, N. S.

And so it has been for the major portion of Sir Charles's life, that, much as he has created and given forth of himself, of his own scrupulously artistic work in poetry and prose, he has had as much more of himself left to give to others who would take up his quest. He has been the exemplar and even the personal teacher of two grateful generations of Canadian poets. He was known and recognized to be among the company of the elect in our grandfathers' days; he had risen to the full noon of his active creative powers in our fathers' times; and now, far on in our own time, he has not ceased to maintain his unassailable position as the fountain-head of our literature.

Imagine the joy of an English body of writers and poets if they could pass down the dim arches of the unrelenting centuries to pay homage to the Poet of Stratford! We are met for a similar purpose here tonight—to pay deserved and full honour to the great man who has come to occupy in Canadian literature the basic position of a national literature's corner-stone similar to that which Shakespeare occupies in the matchless edifice of English literature. And, like another great poet of England, it may well be said of our Sir Charles that "Nothing which he has touched, has he failed to adorn."

Some writers are the children of misfortune—others seem to have been chosen of the gods for the highest type of inspiration and its meet rewards. Even the years have dealt kindly with the inspired man in whose honour we are gathered here tonight. He has refused, or at least he has gracefully and graciously avoided veneration along with venerability, and yet he seems to have found the very spring of youth for which Ponce de Léon sought so long. He has been for long not only the strong rock on which Canadian literature so long ago was steadfastly founded; he has been the fortress in a cultural wilderness that is now a shade lighter after fifty years of cultivation, the fortress from which issued the kindred singing spirits of his cousin Bliss Carman, his friend Archibald Lampman, and his pupils Robert Norwood and Tom Marquis, and a dozen others,

including my humble self. Two generations of poets and novelists, shyly issuing their publications in a land that cannot enable them to earn a living by their pens, have sat at Roberts's feet to learn wisdom, and like myself, they have been abruptly hoisted upward by the warm, comradely hands of this still untired and still inspired man of eighty summers.

If we in Canada today have a name and literature to which the rest of the world may justly render homage, a good sixty per cent of that literature has been due to the genius, the example, the kindliness, the unflagging energy, and the actual teaching of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts. His work, like the work of Sir Isaac Brock, Sir John A. Macdonald, and William Lyon Mackenzie, has given us a nationhood that is spiritual as well as material. With his sixty years of undeviating and incomparable creative work, with the unwearying and innumerable hours which he has spent in teaching lesser poets the true meaning of artistry and self-criticism, he has made many of us more surely aware of a certain spiritual dignity which our Dominion now justly wears as a robe of iridescent light, a robe which she did *not* wear before his *Orion* appeared in 1880.

Sir Charles has never wearied of helping others; perhaps because he needed so little help himself, and because all of his own help came from within; he has never wasted a moment's concern in worrying of his ultimate position in Canadian literature, and he has met with serenity all brief flurries that have saluted the bards of a brief moment or of a single startling volume. Perhaps his lifelong unconcern with it is one of the real reasons for the security of the enduring and exalted position which is unchallengeably his today!

Sir Charles is a great poet—but more than that, he is a great teacher. He has been blessed with the peculiarly subtle power of imparting to others what the finer essence of distilled utterance really is. Tirelessly he has campaigned against the cheap, the popular, the slovenly, the meretricious, and all that savours of self-satisfied, second-rate writing. He has often "slanged"

at the speaker even as at others, for a fatal facility, for too-easy, too-undistinguished achievement. Unsparing in his attitude toward his own work, he has been austerely aware of how easily and meagerly others may be satisfied with their work. Perfection has been his ideal, and the "inevitable" word, as I have so often heard him term it, his Holy Grail. This was his prayer, greatly uttered, in early life, the "Prologue" to his *Sonnets of the Canadian Scene*:

> Across the fog, the moon lies fair,
> Transfused with ghostly amethyst.
> O white Night, charm to wonderment
> The cattle in the mist!
>
> Thy touch, O grave Mysteriarch,
> Makes dull familiar things divine,
> O grant of thy revealing gift
> Be some small portion mine!
>
> Make thou my vision sane and clear
> That I may see what beauty clings
> In common forms and find the soul
> Of unregarded things!

Time itself, unrelenting time, has proven how truly and fully that prayer for a Vision far beyond the ken of ordinary men has been answered. And it has been answered largely because the artist who long ago *besought* this gift of Vision has always worn the bright sword and buckler fashioned of what his own great exemplar Matthew Arnold calls *"the splendid excellence of sincerity and strength."* So excellent and so sincere were these virtues in him that a young poet of twenty-three saw them thus:

> Roberts, the patriarch of our native tongue,
> Whose garnered knowledge of a lifetime's depth
> Makes him more kindly, younger, and humane,
> Wise as the years, although he seems to own
> The matchless secret of eternal youth.
> This singer of an olden Doric lay,

To whom revealed are all of nature's ways,
Her mysteries, the record of her rocks,
In days before mankind had come to birth;
Well he knew Browning, Arnold and Swinburne,
The vast, dim giants of old glorious years;
Knew ill-starred Wilde, and gay LeGallienne.
He awoke Lampman, sponsored long ago,
That deep, fresh mind and gentle-hearted man
Who read "Orion" and did dedicate
Himself unto the high immortal cause.
Patriot, comrade and historian,
Scholar in ancient and concealéd lore,
Poet and lover of all humankind,
He termed me poet and has granted me
Friendship and understanding sympathy.
I leave untold the gratitude I feel,
Save that the gallant "vagrant of old time,"
The genius who pursues his wailing ghost
O'er peak and mire, over dark fen and hill,
Is greatened over all by life's strange quest.

Years later a more mature person, a teacher of thirty-one, stopped suddenly one day as he examined a book of verse, at his desk, arrested by a picture in it, and there, at his desk, as his class laboured away, he wrote a sonnet: On A Picture of Carman and Roberts.

These are great men—they walked no beaten way,
They joined no ranks, embraced no paltry round.
I talked and drank with them one autumn day
And never elsewhere such companions found.
They were a part of all-ennobling life,
They guessed beyond the littleness of death;
They had lived greatly, yet from muddy strife
Dwelt not aloof, but savoured every breath.

Now one of these is gone, and one remains,
One still plays on, though one has played his scene.
Something from time, for Canada, they won
And we are richer for their having been.
I still remember with thoughts fond and slow
I talked and drank with them, once, long ago.

And I feel that all of us here tonight will remember with *thoughts fond and slow* that we have been present on a memorable occasion, an occasion unique in this Club's history, when we paused to pay tribute to a great Canadian, a great artist and poet, and a great teacher and friend, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts.

And as a small token of our affection and love and admiration, we have a little gift for him, chosen because it contains the collected work of a great poet of England, Matthew Arnold, who was to Roberts in his younger days the shining and splendid example that for sixty years Roberts has been to us.

TRIBUTE

From fair Cape Breton's storied Arm of Gold
To Juan de Fuca's shining waterway,
A nation's heart entwines for you today
Maple and laurel for your hands to hold.
A nation's love would cherish and enfold
Your gallant spirit from the world's dismay.
"Now, many a glad return," the people say,
"Grow young, forever young, but never old!"

While Canada remains, you shall endure.
Your name is steadfast as her Northern Star;
As her eternal hills, your fame secure,
And where she journeys you already are;
Your place within her annals proud and sure,
Unfailing as the tides of Tantramar.

Kathryn Munro

A THOMAS HARDY SEQUENCE

HIS CENTENARY

What is a century to the aeoned stars
Leisurely burning in the ageless deep;
Or to the earth, old with eroded scars
And with the mind's slow waking from its sleep?

Nothing or almost nothing. Who count years
But we, the fragile brain of mortal life,
Whose heart is as an hourglass dripping tears
In the still shadow of a waiting knife?

Yet sometimes, as if in our death's despite,
Life blows a music through a trumpet-heart
That challenges the apathy of night—
Night trembles then, it seems, in every part
As if it knew that only love should flare
Where now the lidless stars like monsters glare.

HIS CENTRAL PARADOX

"The heart's love-reasoning is all askew,
Terribly at odds with reality;
Its thought-chain is not only something new
But alien to the whole cosmogony.

"This, I admit, is most illogical
Since all that is, is traceable to Fate,—
Ah yes, even the conscious beautiful
That only thinks in terms of love and hate.

"It's very much as if the starry stuff,
That is the substance of the causal chain,
Naturally dwindled till not enough
Was left,—hence that weak link the heart-sick brain,
Which, through its very weakness, had to wake
To bear the sagging cosmos, lest it break."

HIS STYLE

"Stark is the fate of man, so just as stark
Must be the language that records his fate:
Each word, as from a sling, must hit its mark
Trim as a stone,—flower-pelting's out of date.

"Even the zenith-height of passion's fire
Is blackness hotter than the golden flame.
Let others thrum the poets' rose-laced lyre,
My words must be struck off the cosmic frame.

"There's been too much tongue-squeamish syllabling,
Too properly the poets held the reins;
The tongue that's eloquent of suffering
Suffers too much to take 'aesthetic' pains."

So vowed he; but the mellow rustic heart
His childhood heard softened his steel-frank art.

HE ANSWERS HIS CRITICS

"You've all so often called me pessimist
That I must tell you what this label means.
It means that honest thought is always hissed
Or that you're only talking in your teens.
"For don't you know that any formula
Is much too small to kernel all life in—
Even the happy cornucopia
You pour on me to hide my naked sin?

"You'd have some think my inkwell is all black,
But there's a scarlet in this cosmic ink
You've overlooked, which flows from the heart's crack,
A scarlet much too red for you to think.
I may be wrong about my cosmic It,
But pain is pain whoever's the Infinite."

HE POINTS TO MORTALITY

"Even at best the heart must be undone,
However neutral be the cosmic scheme:
Life's little race in any case is run,
Its goal a vacancy where shone the dream.

"Not even those who think my world too black,
Unless they would unbody life's rich blood,
Can talk of life returning on its track
Or keeping what I call its heart-wrung good.

"My brooding over graves is old as man,
Grief before me had failed to plumb despair;
Death was decreed the moment life began,
Though love too long, it's true, was fooled by prayer;
Life is at most the lover's heart-kept fire,
A wasting candle lifted to a spire."

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MARTY SOUTH

This is the love that's made of homely flesh,
That no man looks upon with heart surprised;
This is the love that spreads no magic mesh
And so is doomed to burn unrecognized.

This is the love whose body's not her own,
Too swift with sacrifice to think of pain;
Staunch as the earth's scar-rugged time-wrung stone,
With all vicissitude she must have lain.

Therefore she must be bride only to death,
Heaper of flowers on a lonely grave
Where sleeps the destined lover, stilled of breath,
Whom destiny, the loveless, never gave—
Her only rivals now the starry sky,
The dews and flowering grass until she die.

August Roberts Leisner

VETERANS OF 1940*

What shall we give them in return for youth,
Robbed of its song on fronts of fear and hate,
Torn from its daybreak by the hands of fate,
Lost to its swift, volcanic dreams of truth,
When they have tossed their passions and their art
Like senseless toys on some concealing shelf,
And left the magic of desire itself
With love's white ardour far behind their heart?
Can metal crosses nourish souls that die
Or kings restore the green untarnished springs?
Can trumpets drown the unforgotten things
That pierce the spirit with a grey lost cry?

Only our sorrow turned at last to song
Shall keep their eyes from growing dark and old;
Only our courage brighter and more bold
Shall pluck them beauty from the pits of wrong.
After the flags of battle have been furled
Only our visions purified to feed
The desperate hunger of the nations' need,
Only our love widened to hold the world
And stretched to touch a World we cannot see,
Shall give them passions fit to fill again
And roads to follow with the urge of men
Who know that more than dreams shall come to be.

Is this one farthing overmuch to pay
To souls that die beneath the winds of Spring,
To lips that hesitate and fear to sing
Because of ghosts that haunt the heart of May?

Isobel McFadden

WHEN A MOTHER HAS NEED OF HER SONS*

England, 1940

From the ends of the earth they hasten, brother by brother,
From the coral reefs and the shoreless northern plains
They come to their ancient tryst at the feet of the Mother
Whose blood is warm in their veins.

For the seas are as brooks that whisper an April story,
And the land is a ribbon whose splendid promise runs
From heart to heart, and Time is a prism of glory
When a mother has need of her sons. . . .

Blood of her blood and bone of her bone she bore them
In alien lands beyond the crested tide,—
Now with her courage like a star before them
They hasten to her side.

Flame of her flame, breath of her breath she bred them
To the full knowledge of the shifting foam,—
Now from strange harbours where their questing led them
Their fleets are turning home.

They will keep faith, she will not find them sleeping
When all the earth is dark with Freedom's tears,
Serenely she will give into their keeping
The burden of her years,

Knowing that they will neither fail nor falter
Until at last the angry tempests cease,
And reverently they lay upon her altar
The winnowed yield of peace. . . .

From the ends of the earth they hasten, brother by brother,
To their tryst at the hallowed Abbey's altar stone
Where sleep the elder sons of the glorious Mother
Whose pulse is one with their own.

For the seas are as pearls dissolved in the wine of her splendour,
And the shores are shining cycles the gray sand runs,
And life and death are lost in the final surrender
When a mother has need of her sons.

Robina Monkman

FRUSTRATION

Maid of the low hills,
Maid of the marsh and the wood mist,
I have seen her haunt
Where the dead leaves
Hurry away from the wind,
And I have heard her voice,
Calling to the cold moon.
I have found a thread of her garment
Caught on the barberry,
But I shall seek her forever
Down the dead Autumns . . .
Not finding her.

Edward F. Donahue

LINGER, O HARSHEST SEASON OF THE YEAR

Linger, O harshest season of the year:
Here are no hearts that, yearning, wait for Spring!
Spring long extolled, to rapturous lovers dear,—
Season of song, of buds and blossoming.
Dear was her beauty, but no more we go
In thrall to Beauty: all our prayers are made
To rig'rous Winter with the frost and snow
Who holds our safety in his ambuscade.

Idle to dream that Spring will bring again
Only the warming sun, the glinting shower.
The skies have darkened for a deadlier rain—
The grim, determined armies wait their hour!
Stay with us then, O Winter! Cold your breath,—
But colder still is Spring's new comrade—Death!

Mary Woodworth

ON A SNAPSHOT OF A YOUNG EGYPTIAN SOLDIER

Three thousand years ago, beside the Nile,
This profile lived on palace walls of stone,
In glowing tints, in hieratic style
Stiff poised; and yet, despite the centuries flown,
Unchanged those lineaments appear today—
The delicate, placid line of chin and cheek,
The tilt of eyebrow, curve of lip which may
Some word of ancient speech be shaped to seek.
Here is a scion of the Pharaoh race,
Age-rooted long before the Ptolemies
Set up a throne, defying to their face
Old Egypt's gods with Grecian heresies.
Land of forgotten mystery, has this soul
Found rebirth to attain a destined goal?

Florence Westacott

LIGHT

Fresh light from a morning sky
blocked through clouds,
blazing the tight tea bushes to a brittle green—
hot light of noon on bare rock,
baking the summer heat into the cracked parchness of earth—
serene light, filtering through bamboo plumes,
waving the afternoon away in graceful quietude—
frail light falling from the shrinking sun,
dreaming across illimitable distances of sea—
half moonlight, shimmering on rice fields filled with harvest,
lying in the highway of the wind—
full moonlight, feeling the freedom of your face,
against the pattern of the pillow
sleeping.

Carol Coates

WHAT FAR KINGDOM

The soil is quick with dust of men
Who will not walk the earth again.

Each handful that is downward cast
Is particled of lives long past.

One cannot grasp the shifting sands
But centuries sift through the hand.

And children dig upon the shore
The dust of some progenitor.

The man who spades a virgin soil
Disturbs cohesion with his toil.

The plough's bright blade bites straight and sure
Commingles dust of rich and poor.

In what far kingdom do they dwell
The dead who loved the earth so well

Whose dust is blown on every breeze
To dim the chlorophyll of trees?

To what far kingdom have they gone
The men whose dust we walk upon?

Arthur S. Bourinot

HOME FROM HAVANA

Not Morro Castle's blood and tears
That drench the dark and stain the stone
And flood the years,
Haunt my heart most now I'm alone. . . .

Nor Capitol's relentless dome
That pours its wealth before the poor
And brings them home
Its mighty diamond in the floor. . . .

Nor the Casino's hands of chance—
Slim and white and very old—
That touch to trance
Marble and men with grace and gold;

Proud Prado, nor the royal palm,
Nor Spanish arrogance on wheels;
Nor the dead calm
Cathedral where old Cuba kneels. . . .

These fade away, but my heart knows
A flower-girl who sold the skies
With one deep rose.
I saw all Cuba in her eyes. . . !

SONNET TO AN ARTIST

Since that first time I caught your vision clear—
  How you had searched for beauty in the light
  And truth among the shadows, day and night,
Lived but for them and nothing else so dear;
How discontent with less is ever near
  Your line and colour charged with inner sight,
  Gazing on life from some subjective height
You clothe it in immortal atmosphere;

From your rich genius, O belovèd friend,
  This is the lesson I have greatly learned,
    I have renewed my early, holy dream,
  A long-lost love of beauty has returned,
    An ideal of perfection, that white gleam
Of truth that may unite us in the end. . . .

Leo Cox

PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF NOVA SCOTIA

OMENS

(Dedicated to a Celtic Nurse)

The dogs howl on the marsh tonight;
(Holy Mary, Mother of God!)
They see Death ride so light, so light,
On his charger with hoofs unshod.

Where does he ride so light, so light?
(Pray for our souls, O Mother mild,
Make him to pass our door tonight,
Thou who once bore a little child.)

Ah! still they yelp as if in pain;
(Silence them, blessed Mother of God.)
What do they hear besides the rain
Falling so lightly on the sod?

"Rest, you are weary," said the sire,
"And superstition holds you bound,
True, the child burns in fever's fire,
But what has that to do with hound?"

Do you forget the bird that flew
Around the room in dizzy flight,
Then with a strange cry bade adieu,
To seek the solace of the night?

Yes, you forget, but I know well
These omens and these eerie sounds;
The cry of bird means something fell,
And Death inspires the wail of hounds.

Morn breaks, the dogs slink home to bed
Cringing, as though beneath the rod,
And James—the fairest child—lies dead,
(Shelter him safe, dear Mother of God!)

Margaret Furness MacLeod

MOON MAGIC

She flung her casement window open wide
To let moon-magic in, and more beside:

To hear the murmur of the soft night air,
To feel the moon's pale fingers on her hair.

All night she knelt, while slowly through her soul
She let the tide of chill moon-magic roll,

Till all the longing of the empty years
Of youth unspent, and bitter, unshed tears,

Had vanished, like the passing of a dream . . .
Swept from her memory by the slow enchanted stream.

At dawn, when fire cleft the night's deep blue,
She rose and pulled her casement window to.

And then, to keep the magic of the night,
She drew her curtains, shutting out the light.

Helen Shackleton Brietzke

A NEW CANADIAN

Deep in a field of peppers and of beans,
Serene and strong she works from day to day.
Dawn finds her bending o'er the nodding rows
To pull the stubborn twitch-grass from its hold,
Or stir the baked soil to creative motion,
And not until the western sky grows red
Does her lithe figure, wearied but unbent,
With upturned hoe and dark against the light
Move to her tent in peace and satisfaction.
Or mayhap when the season's rains are few,
And parching heat would sear the pepper leaves
So precious through the centuries to her race,
Between us and the dying light she moves
Up from the cool brook with her water pails
On a stout rod suspended, poised
Across those ageless shoulders. Only then,
When the clouds she trusted and the winds she loved
Seem to have failed her, do her feet lag,
And that glad whistle which sang to the fields all day
Turn to a sigh—not of mean complaint,
But resignation tinged with quenchless hope
That on the morrow cooling rains would fall,
For "See," she said, "moon, all close tonight."

Her tongue is slow to speak Canadian words,
But her deft fingers talk a language sure
That peppers, corn and beans know well
And urgently alive at her behest
Grow green, grow tall, put forth bright flowers,
Then in due season yield their fruit.

What matter if her speech is slow and halt,
Since from her finger-tips there flows a magic
And a power that brings to being hidden good
And deathless beauty, and creates
Abundant life and joy in her own soul.

A New Canadian she, from a far land,
But in her smile is universal joy,
Her song across the fields is sweet with home and love,
Her eyes darken to pain or glow to happiness,
And when her hand clasps mine, I know
For us race dies and only friendship lives.

Margaret M. Dawson

SNOW POEMS

First Snow Fall

Noiselessly falls the snow,
Vaguely, with chalky finger, erasing
The dim-coloured texts of flowers
On the final page of the year.

Winter Morning

Day breaks open
With a faint explosion of light.
Hills and fields are petals of one white flower. . . .
I tip-toe out into the winter morning,
Into the frozen water-lily of the world.

Kay Smith

THE LATE ETHELWYN WETHERALD

(From a Tribute by Marion Fox)

The little village of Rockwood, Ontario, did not know on April 26, 1857, that the soul of a poet had come to dwell within it. Here Ethelwyn Wetherald lived, except for a few years in the full life of a journalist and writer in the heart of Toronto.

She was contemporary with Duncan Campbell Scott, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, "Seranus," and John W. Garvin. She has left behind a priceless legacy to Canada, songs of rare simplicity and beauty. Serenity, keenness of vision, and enduring faith shone through all her work.

Living close to nature as she did, Miss Wetherald sang of every phase of its beauty. Birds on the wing, trees, flowers, and bees were the themes of her impassioned pen.

In a later letter to me, Miss Wetherald said: "Every human express train has to slow down as it nears the station." Ethelwyn Wetherald's train has entered the Grand Central Depot, and her farewell words are found in her poem:

Legacies

Unto my friends I give my thoughts,
Unto my God my soul,
Unto my foe I leave my love—
These are of life the whole.
Nay, there is something, a trifle left,
Who shall receive this dower?
See, Earth Mother, a handful of dust . . .
Turn it into a flower.

* * *

We are grateful to Mrs. W. B. Dorland of St. Catharines for releasing this last poem of Miss Wetherald:

A WISH

Life, like a wood-path, is a wavering,
Love-haunted, changeful, beauty-shadowed thing.
Some gleam of sun-gold dazzles and is gone,
Some fleeting, fawn-like rapture lures us on.

Be thine the sense of wings, the subtle call
That comes from some bird-breasted waterfall,
The comradeship of trees, the hearts of friends,
And one Near Presence where the footpath bends.

Ethelwyn Wetherald

SYRINGA

(Mock Orange-blossom)

Hush, the night holds the silent wood
And deep in the heart of a hidden dell,
Here by the old deserted well
We wait and watch for the dappled fawn
Who comes to drink when the saffron dawn
Is flushing the lily and dark monk's-hood.
The moon-flowers cover the dog-wood tree
But the canopy hiding your sleek dark head
Is lovelier far, for it seems to wed
You to me tonight. For a bridal veil
You wear, instead
Of a length of tulle, set carefully
With a tiny cluster of stiff white bloom
Tucked under the edge, a fragrant shower
Of orange-blossom, a perfect bower
Around, above you, about your feet,
And the petals pillow your knees, my sweet:
And as you move to make more room
For me to kneel, they fall like rain,
Or confetti thrown by woodland folk,
And I take upon me the easy yoke
Of allegiance due, though I say no word
For out of the silence a sudden bird
Throats seven notes and then falls asleep.
Ah! Here are words enough and to spare
Of hopeless longing and secret pain!
How could I match a song so rare?
So I lock the door of my lips again.
We kneel together to watch the well.

As a primrose banner runs up the sky
Comes a first faint stirring, a little dry
Stick snap, a light footfall, as down the dell
A dappled doe plants her tiny hoof
And close beside her crowds the fawn.
This is the beauty we came to see,
The gentle deer in the early dawn,
But I do not watch them—
Here is proof
That this bridal bloom bewitches me!

Doris Ferne

TIDE TRAPPED

It was good to lie in the Cove
face-down in the sun, the warm stones under our thighs;
good to close our eyes
and smell the salt on the rocks
while the tide ran in with little splashing sounds
over the shingle, and the seagull cries
came down from the high cliffs.
But now
we are cut off. The tide is breaking grey
over the headland: over the path we came;
the beach where we lay is a spattered shrinking line;
we are driven against the cliffs: black walls too steep to climb.
The swelling waves come in: lapping our ankles now,
splashing over our knees; and the whitecaps rise
with the rising wind; and the cold brine blows in our face.
Now we must choose:
to wait ingloriously
till the spray has blinded us, and the undertow
pulls the last stone from under our frantic feet
and we struggle in brief confusion . . .
or to go: (hand-clasp and long-held breath)
plunging deliberately,
stroke after stroke, toward the dark low shore that lies
(we are told, though we have not seen it) surely there
beyond the bank of gathered clouds in the west,
below the uneasy skies.

Floris Clark McLaren

THE KINGDOM O' MINE

To renounce a crown for my Love would be easy,
But I've only a three-year-old hat
That is shrunken and shabby with storms o' the seasons,
And who'd be the wanting o' that?

The kingdom o' mine is a wee bit o' shanty
With a corner that lets in the rain,
And I have been thinking these long years o' fixing
The crack in the front window pane.

They say that my Love has been seeking a hero
In a handsome and shining array,
With a sword and a buckler to guard her from brigands
And drive the bold villains away.

But I have no sword and my coat is o' buckskin,
My armour a rusty old gun,
And if an owl hooted from out o' the darkness
It is sure I would drop it and run.

Ah yes, it is true I have braved the cold winters
And worked all day long in the heat,
But alas, the dear girl cannot see any hero
In the broken old shoes on my feet.

So I fear that my Love will grow old in the waiting
For the gallant who lives in her dreams,
And I shall go back to my wee bit o' shanty
Where the spiders spin webs from the beams.

Rose L. Firth

PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF NOVA SCOTIA

LIFE AND DEATH

Life is a pulse, life is a breath,
Pulse and breath to be one day ended;
Tell each man as he journeyeth,
Life is a pulse, life is a breath.
Tell each man who inquires of death—
Broken rhythms can never be mended;
Life is a pulse, life is a breath,
Pulse and breath to be one day ended.

Stay me not with a wistful dream
Of web too subtle for death to sever.
Dusks descend with the sun's last beam;
Stay me not with a wistful dream.
Dusks descend, and never a gleam
Shall quicken my clay at the dawn forever;
Stay me not with a wistful dream
Of web too subtle for death to sever.

When breath flickers and pulses fail,
This only be mine to cherish:
Still shall the steadfast mind avail,
When breath flickers and pulses fail;
And the golden hours that made up life's tale,
These shall suffice—though the morrows perish.
When breath flickers and pulses fail,
This only be mine to cherish.

John M. Ewing

FAR HENCE A WORLD

Far hence a world absolved of hate and sin—
  Far, and receding farther from our view;
  Dim wane the visions of Life keyed anew
To placid harmony, without, within.
The golden years, men dreamed, might soon begin,
  With every prophecy of peace come true
  And justice shared by all men, not the few . . .
Where now that guerdon we assumed to win?

And yet . . . encompassed by dismay and doubt,
  Our ancient solace grows more precious still:
Valour to face catastrophe without,
  And—deep within—the indomitable will;
With loyal friendship firm amid the rout,
  A rallying banner on a lofty hill.

Lionel Stevenson

GHOSTS

I saw them cross the street today,
All in the pale October sun.
Four by four and four by four,
The ordered march had just begun,
When I turned off another way.

I hurried down a side-way lane,
To dull the sound of marching feet.
Four by four and four by four,
The echoes called along the street,
An old recessional of pain.

All in the soft October rain,
I felt a crowd of ghosts brush by,
Four by four and four by four.
I heard a thin, renascent cry.
The dead battalions walked again.

Lettie Ann Hill

NO SECOND SPRING

The cold December snows have melted,
The wind blows warmer than before,
And Spring is on its way, my darling,—
But not the Spring we knew of yore!

The buds shall soon unfold, my darling,
And lovers tell their tale anew,
While April moons beam on in glory,—
Just as they did when Spring was new!

The birds, returned, are once more nesting,
The skies are clear and warm and blue,
And Spring is back again, my darling,
Though not for me, and not for you!

Marina Esering

SEA SHELL

In the hollow of my hand
I hold the music of the sea
In perpetual motion
Confined within the erstwhile shell
Of an ocean mollusc
Whose blind progression
From dusk to dusk,
With sea and sand,
Evolved each cell—
A trilogy of science, music, art—
The rapture of its sound no man may capture
Nor form its exquisite counterpart.

Caroline D'Aguilar Henderson

CANADIAN POETRY REVIEWS

The Work of Lady Roddick

HERETOFORE, this department, which has made a practice of reviewing only "public" presentations of Canadian poets, feels that it should tangibly acknowledge the gift of the four volumes of verse published in the last five years by Lady Roddick. The name of Amy Redpath Roddick is one that is very well known in Canadian literary circles. Her radiant personality, her unselfish kindness toward others of her craft, and her charming quality of modesty that almost becomes reticence in regard to her own work are among her most endearing characteristics. Her last four volumes reveal the best of her lyric and dramatic gifts. She is a devotee of the classic verse-forms and finds comparatively easy expression in the rigid metre of the sonnet. Her personal qualities of deep religious feeling, sincere and abiding affection for all humankind, and unaffected love of all that is beautiful in nature make the note that she sounds one of unalloyed courage, sweetness and light.

In 1936 John Dougall and Son of Montreal published her *I Travel to the Poets' Mart,* a collection of lyrics, sonnets, triolets. One of this reviewer's favourites in the volume was the sonnet that is titled with its own forthright opening "Then an Upper Orchard." There is a definite all-pervading pantheism in her books which reveal to all who may read, her love of the God that dwells in nature. This book closes with a rousing and reiterative apostrophe to the Rocky Mountains:

> Flame that flashes from the sunset,
> Flame that flashes from the dawn,
> Soul of all creation's marrow
> From our past revealing drawn:
>
> Give to us ennobling vision,
> Power beyond this heavy Now,

Power to delve with holy passion,
Power to keep one's highest vow.

Shed your lustre on our striving
Till each heart attain to love,
Fervent love and true ascension
Glimpsed through peaks that point above.

It would ill beseem us after quoting as fine a series of quatrains as the above to offer gratuitous advice to this gracious poet, yet we did feel that, here and there, especially when she is writing with a verve and dash that seem to indicate that creation is no laborious task with her and that much of her more emotional work is struck off at white heat, we did feel that here and there the poet's rhymes seemed to dictate the current of expression and thought, rather than the desirable opposite. And there are times too when even apt alliteration's artful aid, great enhancer of onomatopoeia though it be, can be overused. The poet will note that even Swinburne did this to his disadvantage when he allowed the mere *sound* of his lines to becloud their *sense*. A truth for all poets to remember is that of Keats who said that there was no greater joy to the poetic mind or heart than, on careful revising, to enjoy "the re-perception and ratification of what is fine in one's own work." And this joy, especially in a scrupulous artist like the Keats of the Odes, was increased by the purification of imperfections in weaker lines or phrases that did not exactly express the desired thought, or convey most tellingly the necessary impression.

In 1937 Lady Roddick issued a closet-drama in verse, *Tharbis*. It tells chiefly in blank verse the story of a dusky Ethiopian princess, a captive in Egypt, and of her love for the great leader of the Israelites, Moses. The play unfolds a tale of palace intrigue and plotting that is overshadowed by the towering figure of the Prophet. Here and there, the poet turns from blank verse to free verse, and the effect is dramatic throughout.

Lady Roddick, who last year at Caughnawaga was made

Princess Kawennaroroks of the Mohawks' Bear Clan, has always been interested in the colourful aboriginal people of Canada. In 1938 she published *The Tomahawk, a Playlet and Other Poems.* The scene of *The Tomahawk* is laid at Caughnawaga with a weird "Conjuring Scene" at Ancient Hochelaga. The writer projects herself almost symbolically into the Prologue as a "Writer," who "transcribes" the "Conjured Scene." The rhythm of the Indian Dance is revived, and much insight is given the reader of picturesque tribal rites and legends of old. A sequence of sonnets and other poems make up the latter half of this book.

Lady Roddick's last book *The Iroquois . . . and A Chance Meeting . . . and Other Poems* (1939) is also dominated by the Indian scene. Princess Kawennaroroks mentioned in an accompanying letter that she, like Hinonaia, had dedicated her own Long House among the Bear Clan at Caughnawaga. The book opens with a rendition, first in English and then in Mohawk, of the traditional Mohawk chant that was chanted by all the Clan at her adoption into the tribe. This foreword was written by the "Wife of Chief Poking Fire" to whose tribe Lady Roddick, now Princess Kawennaroroks, presented the Long House. That day the nonagenarian sachem, Chief Wolverine, presided. In this book also there is a drama, "The Chance Meeting" that transpires in Rome in 62 A.D. and that deals movingly with an episode in the life of none other than Seneca, Prime Minister to Nero, who meets the young stoic philosopher Epictetus.

Among other poems it is touching to note, and ironical to meditate upon, a whole-hearted sonnet of thankfulness written in October, 1938, at the time of the macabre Munich Pact, the "Peace-in-our-Time" pack that sacrificed Czechoslovakia, and later Poland, upon the grim altar of unpreparedness. The name of Lady Roddick's poem is "When Chamberlain Flew."

N. A. B.

Fancy Free. By CAROL COATES. Toronto, Ryerson Poetry Chapbook, Ryerson Press, Sixty cents.

SEVERAL of the poems included in this chapbook have been published in the *Canadian Poetry Magazine.* And the qualities which prompted their acceptance are only too rare in the general mass of verse submitted to the editor. For every poem marked by restraint and clarity of outline there are fifty contributions plastered with conventional sentiment. The poetry of Carol Coates belongs to the order of Imagism familiar to us through the work of Amy Lowell, Richard Aldington, and H. D. Its essential character was condensation, frequently reduced to starkness, a logical corrective to the prevailing tradition of Longfellow with its excessive romanticism. On the formal side it showed its heretical tendency by the adoption of *vers libre* with the substitution of the *strophe* for rhyme and metre. One mode particularly was the Japanese *hokku* which became amazingly popular.

Carol Coates lived for some years in Japan which may help to explain the exotic nature of much of her verse. Certainly this chapbook has its own individual distinction. The poetry is remarkably free of the *cliché* and the diluted expression. The phrases are not only novel but very appropriate to the perfectly controlled moods, and it is a pleasure to add the statement that her recent and unpublished verse is a further advance in the technical mastery of the medium she has chosen. Any poems of *Fancy Free* may be taken as illustrations of her art but the more prominent examples are "One Word," "Magnolia," "Korean Dancer," "Troop Train," and "White Bones."

E. J. P.

NEWS NOTES OF CONTRIBUTORS

August Roberts Leisner is the son-in-law of Theodore Goodridge Roberts. He is at present pursuing a graduate course towards a Ph.D. His special interest is Thomas Hardy, upon whose life and work Mr. Leisner has written a sustained sonnet sequence which may soon appear as a published volume.

Out of a large number of poems submitted to the Ontario Contest under the sponsorship of the Poetry Group of the Toronto Branch of the C.A.A., we have published the best six: "Veterans of 1940" by Isobel McFadden, "When a Mother Has Need of Her Sons" by Robina Monkman, "Frustration" by Edward F. Donahue, "Linger, O Harshest Season of the Year" by Mary Woodworth, "On a Snapshot of a Young Egyptian Soldier" by Florence Westacott, "Light" by Carol Coates Cassidy. All these writers have appeared before in this magazine with the exception of Mr. Donahue of Kitchener, Ont.

Margaret Furness MacLeod is the Convenor of the Montreal Poetry Group.

Mrs. Brietzcke is a sister of Kathleen Shackleton, the artist, and of the late Sir Ernest Shackleton, the explorer. She has published several books of poetry and children's stories.

Margaret M. Dawson lives in Niagara Falls, Ont.

John M. Ewing is a Professor of Psychology in the Normal School of Vancouver; Marina Esering is of Windsor, Ont., and Lettie Ann Hill is President of the Calgary Branch of the C.A.A.

JUST PUBLISHED

RENAISSANCE AND ENGLISH HUMANISM

BY

DOUGLAS BUSH

The author is a professor of English at Harvard University, and an eminent authority.

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